

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated May 24, 2004. Claims 12-18 are pending. No claims have been amended herein.

The title has been changed as suggested by the Examiner.

While applicant does not necessarily agree with the obviousness-type double patenting rejections, a terminal disclaimer has been filed herewith in order to render the same moot.

Claim 12 stands rejected under Section 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Yoshida (US 6,222,599) in view of Wu (US 5,260,818). This Section 103(a) rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Claim 12 requires that: (1) LC domains comprise LC molecules in a “radially-inclined” orientation state (e.g., see Figs. 7C and 8; pg. 52, line 24 to pg. 53, line 1; pg. 55, lines 2-6) ; and (2) LC domains be at least partially located both on/at solid sub-electrode portions and on/at openings in the electrode. For example, see Fig. 7C of the instant application where one domain is formed on/at a solid sub-electrode portion 14b of the electrode and another domain is formed on/at an opening 14a in the electrode. Fig. 7C also illustrates that in a given domain, LC molecules of the domain are arranged in a radially inclined orientation state about a central axis so as to extend in many different directions outwardly from the central axis.

Yoshida fails to disclose or suggest each of the aforesaid aspects (1) and (2) of claim 12. Example differences between Yoshida and an example embodiment of this invention are shown in Exhibit 1 attached hereto, for purposes of comparison.

With respect to aspect (1), Exhibit 1 illustrates that Yoshida fails to disclose or suggest LC domains comprising LC molecules in a “radially-inclined” orientation state. The left-hand drawing of Exhibit 1 shows that stripe-shaped electrode 20 in Yoshida, in combination with

parallel stripe-shaped common electrodes 18, causes the liquid crystal molecules on either side of stripe-shaped electrode 20 to be oriented in the *same* direction slanting away from the electrode 20. In this regard, the left-hand drawing of Exhibit 1 is a top view of the effect caused by Fig. 4 of Yoshida. In contrast, the right-hand drawing of Exhibit 1 is Fig. 7C of the instant application – an example of domains according to this invention. It can be seen from the right-hand side of Exhibit 1 that liquid crystal molecules in each domain are radially inclined relative to the domain's central axis. The difference between Yoshida and certain example embodiments of this invention is clear. In particular, there is no "radially-inclined orientation state" in domains on the left-hand side of Exhibit 1 (Yoshida), whereas there is on the right-hand side of Exhibit 1 (example of instant invention).

Additionally, with respect to aspect (2) of claim 12, Yoshida fails to disclose or suggest different LC domains formed both on/at solid sub-electrode portions and on/at openings in a particular electrode. As shown in Fig. 6 of Yoshida for example, one domain is formed between electrode 20 and electrode 18, whereas another domain is formed between electrode 20 and another different electrode 18. There is nothing in Yoshida which discloses or suggests different LC domains formed both on/at solid sub-electrode portions and on/at openings in a particular electrode which includes the sub-electrode portions.

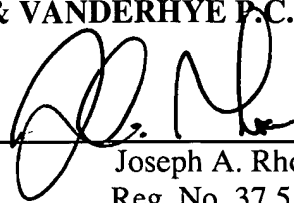
Citation to Wu cannot overcome the fundamental flaws of Yoshida discussed above. For instance, even if Yoshida and Wu were combined as alleged in the Office Action (which would be incorrect in any event), the two aforesaid aspects (1) and (2) of claim 12 still would not be met.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that all rejections be withdrawn. All claims are in condition for allowance. If any minor matter remains to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned with regard to the same.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. A. Rhoa", is written over a horizontal line.

Joseph A. Rhoa
Reg. No. 37,515

JAR:caj
1100 North Glebe Road, 8th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201-4714
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100